

NOSE CONE
EVADES IBL
SEARCH PLANES,
SHIPS

HONOLULU ADVERTISER
15 AUG. 59



This is probably the first published photo of top secret U-2 jet research plane.

Strange U-2 Hides Here

An up-to-now top secret, high altitude jet aircraft with weirdly designed long, thin wings was used in yesterday's Discoverer nose cone recovery attempt. It was learned

The plane, called the U-2, arrived at Hickam Air Force Base under cover of darkness sometime Thursday night or early yesterday morning.

IT FLEW with the nine big

Flying Boxcars that were to grab the nose cone as it plunged to earth. When the mission ended, the U-2 returned to Hickam where it was put under guard in a hangar.

It was seen in the hangar by at least one observer yesterday morning and the Air Force, questioned about the plane, issued a brief state-

ment which described the U-2 as a "high altitude research aircraft."

THE U-2'S ROLE in the nose cone catching mission was not disclosed.

There was speculation, however, that the plane may carry special photographic gear designed to capture on film

the cone's re-entry into the atmosphere.

The U-2's wings are its most outstanding feature. They are long and flexible and while taxiing or taking off they are supported by sets of light wheels that fall away when the plane becomes airborne. Observers tagged the wing supports "outriggers."

THE AIR FORCE announcement said the U-2 was making "a series of test flights which began April 13" and which are part of "a development program to improve the operational effectiveness of the latest types of airborne weather data collection equipment."

It said the weather data obtained "will materially aid the Air Force ballistic missile and space firings from Vandenberg Air Force Base recently inaugurated on the Pacific Missile Range."

THE AIR FORCE said this was all the information on the U-2 authorized for release by the Defense Department.

If the plane is equipped with photo gear, observers speculated that it might include new types of wide angle lenses designed to photograph vast sweeps of the sky from high altitudes.

Such photographs might reveal the re-entry of the nose cone, even though the re-entry was not seen by human observers in the area at the time.